

# Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

## Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

### 2007 DROUGHT AND BURN BAN SITUATION REPORT # 13 17 January 2008, 1500 Hours

*New Information in Bold Italic Type*

#### SUMMARY

Statewide precipitation for the previous water year (1 October 2006 through 30 September 2007) was below normal. Despite recent precipitation, exceptional drought conditions persist in portions of southwest Virginia.

#### EXECUTIVE ACTION

**EOC Activation:** The Virginia Emergency Operations Center is at Routine status and is operating with normal staff.

**State of Emergency:** Governor Timothy M. Kaine declared a Statewide Emergency on 18 October 2007 and imposed a statewide ban on all open burning. The statewide ban on open burning was lifted by Governor Timothy M. Kaine on 15 November. The Statewide Emergency remains in effect to deal with potential or actual drought related issues.

Governor Kaine requested that the Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture declare Virginia a statewide disaster area due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures in 2007. The Acting US Secretary of Agriculture designated 78 additional counties and 34 independent cities as primary natural disaster areas on 18 October 2007 due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures that occurred from January 1, 2007, and continuing.

Governor Kaine sent a letter to all localities dated 29 November 2007 advising them that the most effective water restrictions are those developed at the local level and asked that localities review their drought water conservation and contingency plans associated with public waterworks and if there was no current drought plan, one should be developed. Governor Kaine also asked localities to review their local ordinances requiring mandatory non-essential water use restrictions during declared emergencies and assure that the ordinances are consistent with the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan and if the locality has not adopted such ordinances, they should consider the development and adoption of these. DEQ – [COV Drought Response Plan](#)

**Executive Order:** [Executive Order 57 \(2007\)](#)

#### WEATHER FORECAST

**Southwest VA – Thursday, 17 Jan:** *Winter Storm Warning in effect until 1600 hrs, 17 January. Snow, freezing rain, rain and sleet in the morning and early afternoon the changing to rain, freezing rain in the afternoon; total accumulation of 3 to 5 inches with ice accumulation of one-tenth to quarter inch; high temperatures in the low to upper 30's; southeast-southwest winds 5 to 15 MPH. Thursday night: Mostly cloudy with a 20% chance of rain, freezing rain in the evening; low temperatures in the upper 20's to low 30's; west- southwest winds 5 to 10 MPH. Friday, 18 Jan: Partly sunny; slight chance of scattered flurries, freezing drizzle in the morning and early afternoon; high temperatures in the upper 30's to low 40's; west winds 5 to 10 MPH. Friday night:*

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*Mostly cloudy; 20% chance of snow after midnight; low temperatures in the low to mid 20's; light and variable winds.*

## OPERATIONS SECTION

**ESF 5 – Emergency Management:** Posting event related items to WebEOC under event titled “WebEOC, 2007-10 Drought and Burn Ban”; Participating as member of the Drought Monitoring Task Force; monitoring weather, river flow and precipitation reports; assessing the impact across the Commonwealth; limited exemption of hours worked for hay and feed carriers was extended until 0600 hours, 15 April 2008. ***VDEM Operations Director, Harry Colestock, and VDEM Recovery and Mitigation Director, George Roarty, attended a North Carolina Emergency Management Forum in Asheville, North Carolina, that discussed the drought in the Southeastern US. Points discussed for North Carolina were:***

- ***Description of a tiered system to identify water systems vulnerability to drought and a group of functional state task forces to address specific drought issues***
- ***State actions included water basin meetings, tracking of public water system status and promotion of conservation (especially industries and big users).***
- ***In agriculture, state identified need for 800,000 round hay bales for livestock; Tobacco Trust Fund allocated \$500,000 for transport of bales with grant applications used to determine eligibility of farmers; corporate and faith-based financial donations were collected to set up financial assistance programs for farmers. \$3.5 million made available by Governor to pay for hay-hauling.***
- ***Legislature looking at possibility of inter-basin water transfers***
- ***NC Governor Easley Press Release issued on 14 January detailed new actions to combat the drought.***
  - ***Governor told the state's 30 most vulnerable communities that they need to take actions now to ensure adequate water during the potential summer drought***
  - ***Governor directed his Dept of Natural Resources to quickly identify the funding needed to make sure undue amounts of water are not being lost to leaks and other structural problems***
  - ***Governor also requested that public water systems adopt conservation-based rate structures to encourage both residential and commercial customers to save water***
- ***Other State reports***
  - ***South Carolina – 44 Of 46 counties in severe drought designation; no plan as of yet; looking at basin-based plan; voluntary conservation efforts have become less effective over time; trying to determine triggers for action***
  - ***Georgia – experiencing 2 year drought with lots of politics involved; Lake Lanier supplies 5 million people and run by US Army Corps of Engineers; FEMA Emergency Declaration requested and state is tracking cost; use a tiered system similar to NC; looking at contingency of 1 gallon/person/day for planning purposes***
  - ***Alabama – no plan and looking to learn from other states***
- ***Virginia's plans and current efforts were discussed and included background of recent droughts, development of the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan, current drought impacts, Governor's Emergency Declaration, resources in readiness, water system problems exacerbated by drought and potential funding and other resources to mitigate the impacts of the drought situation [Limited Exemption of Hours Worked for Hay and Feed Carriers](#)***

**State Warning Point:** Normal operations

**Local Liaison:** VDEM Regional Coordinators are monitoring drought impacts to localities in their region. ***VDEM Region Four Coordinator attended the monthly water***

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*planning/drought issues meeting at the Lenowisco Planning District Commission in Scott County and provided the following report:*

- *Town of Appalachia – successfully pumping water from the Powell River; current water supply up to 72 days; applying for Rural Development Grant funding to make temporary pump system permanent; costs so far are approximately \$99,000 not including town labor or equipment use; electricity use by pump station cost approximately \$3200 per month*
- *Town of Big Stone Gap – reservoir at 370 million gallons; estimate 110 day supply*
- *City of Norton – 100 day supply; decreased purchases from Wise Public Service Authority to 20% of need*
- *Wise County Public Service Authority – ‘doing okay’; Clinch River has risen 3 feet*
- *Town of Wise – 240 day supply*
- *Lee County Public Service Authority – floating intake in reservoir is being constructed; secondary site at Blue Springs is stable*
- *Town of Dungannon – accountability in November 2007 was 50%; December figures not yet available; using \$20,000 of Planning District Commission funding to buy meters to aid in leak detection*
- *Gate City Public Service Authority – Gate City PSA and Scott County PSA are interconnected and doing okay*
- *Town of Pound – draw from Flanagan and Clinch Rivers and in good shape*
- *Town of St. Paul – draw from Clinch River and in good shape*
- *Town of Coeburn – reservoir in good shape*
- *Danco/Scott County Public Service Authority – draw from Clinch River and another unnamed source and doing okay*

### **EMERGENCY SERVICES BRANCH**

**ESF 4 – Firefighting:** *VA Department of Forestry reported that wildfire activity remains light, which is normal for the winter months in Virginia. Since January 1, the Department of Forestry has responded to 27 wildfires which have burned 288 acres. Officials remain concerned about the upcoming spring wildfire season and the continued prediction of drier and warmer than normal conditions.* Even though the Statewide Ban on Open Burning has been lifted, VA Department of Forestry advises that several localities have implemented their own ban on burning and residents should check with their locality prior to conducting any open burning. [Local Burn Ban Restrictions](#)

**ESF 8 – Public Health & Medical Services:** Virginia Department of Health and Office of Drinking Water continue to monitor and stand by for consultation and coordination.

### **HUMAN SERVICES BRANCH**

**ESF 11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources:** Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services reported the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission provided \$500,000 in grant funding to the South West Virginia Agriculture Development Foundation for transportation and purchasing for hay assistance to farmers. The Commission had previously allocated the grant to the Farm Service Agency, but took action to modify the grant because of the expressed needs of area agricultural producers and agribusiness leaders. This action takes the grant away from the program confines of USDA, allowing greater flexibility in the development of the hay exchange program. The \$500,000 grant was allocated out of the Tobacco Commission SW Economic Development Committee and will apply only to 14 counties the Commission described as southwest localities. All Virginia localities have access to federal drought disaster assistance. [VDACS Drought Related Information](#); [VDACS Hay Clearing House](#)

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### INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT BRANCH

**ESF 1 – Transportation:** The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles jointly authorized a temporary waiver of registration and license requirements along with normal weight and width restrictions for the purpose of ensuring essential emergency relief supplies reach the disaster area in a timely manner. [Waiver to Carriers Specifically Transporting Hay and Feed Products within the Commonwealth](#)

**ESF 3 – Public Works & Engineering:** The Virginia Department of Health has not reported any impacts to public water supplies that have compromised their ability to provide the needs of their customers. 60 systems have initiated water conservation measures; 29 mandatory water conservation requirements and 31 voluntary water conservation requirements.

***Drought conditions have remained stable over the Commonwealth during the last month with some slight improvement in southwest Virginia which the US Drought Monitor indicates is in extreme drought conditions.*** [US Drought Monitor - VA](#): [US Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)

Waterworks are encouraged to develop water conservation and contingency plans and local governments are encouraged to adopt local water conservation ordinances. [DEQ Water Conservation Tips](#)

DEQ chairs the Drought Monitoring Task Force and is conducting monthly conference calls to monitor the drought impact and issues a monthly drought report. [DMTF Report December 2007](#)

### PLANNING SECTION

**Situation/Documentation Unit:** Preparing and distributing weekly Situation Reports, monitoring WebEOC entries and maintaining situational awareness. ***Next Situation Report will be issued Thursday, 24 January 2008.***

### LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Wise County declared a local emergency on 31 October due to drought conditions that have caused a severe raw water supply shortage to retail water customers in Wise County. The Mayor and Town Council of Appalachia along with Wise County declared a water emergency and implemented conservation measures and prohibited non-essential water usage. An Emergency Virginia Water Permit was issued by the VA Department of Environmental Quality that permits withdrawal of 500,000 gallons per day from the Powell River and pumps it to their reservoir. The permit is valid for one year, however, if mandatory water conservation measures cease, the permit is invalid. ***Towns of Appalachia and Big Stone Gap are working on an interconnecting pipe with an estimated cost of \$500,000.***

The Town of Dungannon and Scott County declared a local emergency on 9 November due to a water infrastructure issue involving the Town of Dungannon water system. ***The Virginia Rural Water Association has loaned leak detection equipment and staff to assist with leak detection operations that are on-going. The water tank is averaging around 29 feet of water and has a capacity of 39 feet.*** Prior repair of leaks have allowed the system to hold its own. The boil water notice remains in effect.

Lee County reported to the VDEM Region 4 Coordinator that at their current rate of water usage they would be out of water within 30 days. Lee County has not declared a local emergency and has not requested any official assistance at this time. The intake pipe at KVS Quarry needs to be relocated to deeper water. VDEM Recovery and Mitigation is assisting with contacts for possible funding sources to provide financial assistance in relocation of the intake pipe. Lee County has a contract with the Arthur-Shawnee System in Tennessee as an alternate source of water. **Lee**

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*County is working on an agreement with the Town of Jonesville as an alternate source of water.*

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